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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington, D.C. 20250 (202) 720-4330

Letter No. 2593

January 15, 1993

MADIGAN HOLDS RADIO CONFERENCE -- On January 12, Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan held an open-topic radio conference with farm broadcasters. This was the last that Madigan will make with broadcasters before leaving office. Among the many issues Madigan discussed were GATT, NAFTA and the reorganization of USDA. (See photo A).



MADIGAN ADDRESSES USDA RESTRUCTURING -- On January 7, Secretary of Agriculture held a press conference to address preliminary plans to restructure USDA field offices. "The current USDA field office structure is comparable to that which existed when 20 percent of the U.S. population lived on farms and was without modern communication. Today, less than 1 percent of the U.S. population lives on farms and has all of the modern transportation and telecommunication services available to them." Madigan made reference to the number of field offices in relation to the number of farmers, and stressed that restructuring is not going to effect the quality of USDA services. "This is not about reducing service to the farmers," Madigan said. "It is about being able to afford to improve our services to farmers in a manner that respects the role of the American taxpayer." Contact: Roger Runningen (202) 720-4623.

NEW ENTRIES IN FARMER-OWNED RESERVE -- Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan announced that producers may enter 1992-crop corn, grain sorghum and barley in the Farmer-Owned Reserve. "I am making this announcement now so producers can plan their marketing and price support activities," Madigan said. Total quantity of corn, grain sorghum and barley in the FOR may not exceed 600 million bushels. Madigan also emphasized producers may not obtain a FOR loan until the expiration of a nine-month regular, nonrecourse price support loan. FOR loan collateral must meet all quality requirements for feed grains that are pledged as collateral for a nonrecourse price support loan. Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.

SOYBEANS ON OPTIONAL FLEXIBLE ACRES -- Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan announced that soybeans may be planted on optional flexible acreage as allowed by the 1993 price support and production adjustment programs. Deficiency payments will not be made to optional flexible acreage planted to a crop other than the crop for which acreage base has been established. However, producers who plant program crops or oilseeds on optional flexible acres may receive price support. **Contact: Robert Feist (202) 720-6789.**

NEW CORN RESISTANT TO PESTS -- A new corn, designated GT-FAWCC (C5), that reduces fall armyworm leaf damage by 25 percent has been released to plant breeders. The new germplasm will be particularly helpful in the South, where armyworm causes the most problems. Scientists estimate the armyworm causes \$25 to \$30 million in damage to crops in the southeastern states each year. Scientists with USDA's Agricultural Research Service developed the corn germplasm by screening several thousand plants from Mexico, the Caribbean and Brazil. **Contact: Sean Adams (301) 504-9108.**

ANIMAL BIOTECHNOLOGY -- The world's first calves of predetermined sex produced from sorted sperm and in vitro fertilization of cows' eggs have been born in Cambridge, England. The sperm sorting technology was developed by a USDA scientist. USDA has patented the technology and issued a non-exclusive license to Animal Biotechnology Cambridge Ltd. of Cambridge, England. In developing the sperm-sorting technology at the Agricultural Research Center in Beltsville, Md., researchers have obtained live births of predetermined sex in swine, sheep and rabbits. Researchers said 75 to 90 percent of the offspring were of the predicted sex. **Contact: Sandy Miller Hays (301) 504-9089.**

SOIL QUALITY TEST NEEDED -- A global network to monitor soil health is urgently needed, according to scientists with USDA's Agricultural Research Service. Currently, there is nothing available that can measure and predict farming's effects on all the key aspects of soil quality, such as soil productivity, environmental quality, food safety and quality, and human health. Scientists say it is no longer just a question of measuring the traditional physical and chemical properties to predict crop yields. **Contact: Don Comis (301) 504-9073.**

LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY UPDATE -- Slaughter levels continue to be held down by current feedlots and a series of winter storms which slowed weight gains. Brisk beef sales following Thanksgiving resulted in increased orders at retail levels. Tight beef supplies and beef import restraints in December, and concern for supplies of lean processing beef, caused prices to fluctuate for 90 percent lean beef. **Contact: Ron Gustafson (202) 219-1285.**

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FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1858 -- John Snyder looks at changes in the mushroom industry that could affect how farmers do business and how much we pay for the tasty fungus. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1340 -- Reflections of an outgoing ag secretary; food safety update; frozen pies; curbs on wood burning?; deicers and your lawn. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1850 -- USDA news highlights; a first look at new ag secretary designate; feed grains into the reserve after all; agriculture cruisin' 63; and ag finance outlook. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1603 -- Dry country legume; landscaping with globemallow; breeding resistant pecans; new pecan disease; and strength training vs. aerobics. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Thursday, January 21, catfish processing; Friday, January 22, oil crops outlook, livestock and poultry update, dairy outlook; Monday, January 25, crop values summary; Tuesday, January 26, crop/weather update; Thursday, January 28, poultry production, world tobacco situation; Friday, January 29, ag prices, cattle on feed, sheep and lambs on feed (first report of a new USDA series). **These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.**

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359.

Material changed at 5 p.m., ET, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

FEATURES -- Lynn Wyvill reports on food safety tips for giving and receiving mail order food gifts and Pat O'Leary reports on real Christmas trees.

ACTUALITIES -- Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan on USDA's reorganization and Russia's default on debt; Excerpts from confirmation hearing of Representative Mike Espy (D-Miss.), Secretary of Agriculture nominee; USDA World Board Chairman James Donald on outlook for wheat, corn and soybean crops and USDA chief meteorologist Norton Strommen on crop progress and the drought in the West.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- DeBoria Janifer reports on nutrition labeling for meat and poultry; Pat O'Leary has a three-part series on the changing number of U.S. farms; Lynn Wyvill reports on USDA soy oil diesel research and Brian Norris reports on rural health care information.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- Agriculture Update with anchors Eric Parsons and Lori Spiczka. Five minutes of USDA farm program information in news desk format with B-roll.

Available on Satellite Galaxy 6, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., ET, Saturdays from 10 - 10:30 a.m., ET, and Mondays from 8 - 8:30 a.m., ET.

OFFMIKE

BAD WEATHER...wouldn't be a bad deal. That's the way **Larry Burchfield** (KWCK, Searcy, AR) put it when talking about Ag Expo '93 in Searcy, Jan. 15-16. Larry says inclement weather increases attendance. Exhibit space has sold out. Larry says there are more feed and livestock companies participating this year, exhibiting to the region's row crop and livestock producers. Larry will be broadcasting live from the new exhibit hall at the fair grounds.

NO-TILL...may get a boost due to the lack of opportunity for fall tillage work, says **Gary Kinnett** (WIAI, Danville, IL). Many corn and bean producers were harvesting during December due to wet fields. But the yields were terrific, some corn coming in at 236 bushels per acre.

FARM ISSUES...have been assigned to **Karl Freundt** (KTKA-TV, Topeka, KS). Karl also covers the state capital.

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Office of Public Affairs
Radio-TV Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20250-1300

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TEN-DAY...tour of Israel was covered in December by **Don Green** (AgDay, Lafayette, IN). Among the many activities sampled by the group of 31 AgDay viewers was life on a collective farm. **Al Pell**, who hosted the tour and conducted several interviews for his daily syndicated program, says Israel is a world leader in irrigation and greenhouse technology.

FARM BROADCASTER...Public Affairs Specialist position is open at USDA Radio. For information about how to apply, contact Norita Fortune (202) 720-4802, USDA Office of Personnel, Room 12-W Administration Bldg., 14th & Independence Ave. SW, Washington D.C. 20250. Ask for information about announcement 13-3-54. Closing date is January 27, 1993.

CORRECTION...**Kathleen Erickson** (KLSN, Jefferson, IA) reports that her husband's first name is Bruce, not Scott, as stated in the December 24, 1992 issue. Our apologies.

VIC POWELL 
Chief, Radio & TV Division